



# Food Handler Certification (US)

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## Practice Questions

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### 1. What does the abbreviation TCS stand for in food safety?

- A. Temperature Cleaning System
- B. Total Calorie Standard
- C. Total Contamination Safety
- D. Time/Temperature Control for Safety

### 2. Norovirus is most often spread by:

- A. Thorough cooking
- B. Contaminated soil
- C. Refrigeration
- D. An infected food handler who did not wash hands after using the restroom

### 3. The temperature danger zone is:

- A. 32 to 70 degrees F
- B. 0 to 41 degrees F
- C. 135 to 165 degrees F
- D. 41 to 135 degrees F

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### 4. Cross-contamination is:

- A. Adding spices to food
- B. The transfer of harmful substances or microorganisms from one food or surface to another
- C. Freezing food
- D. Cooking food twice



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**5. Hands should be scrubbed with soap for at least:**

- A. 5 seconds
- B. 2 minutes
- C. 20 seconds
- D. 10 seconds

**6. Which of the following is one of the major food allergens?**

- A. Peanuts
- B. Rice
- C. Olive oil
- D. Lettuce

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**7. Cleaning removes food and dirt, while sanitizing:**

- A. Only makes surfaces shiny
- B. Adds a pleasant fragrance
- C. Removes grease only
- D. Reduces pathogens to safe levels

**8. Which of these is a sign of a rodent infestation?**

- A. Fresh paint
- B. Droppings and gnaw marks
- C. New equipment
- D. Clean floors

**9. Which of these is a safe method to thaw food?**

- A. In a refrigerator at 41 degrees F or below
- B. In a warm oven
- C. In standing warm water
- D. On the counter at room temperature

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**10. A food handler who is vomiting or has diarrhea should:**

- A. Wear gloves and continue
- B. Keep working as usual
- C. Be excluded from work until symptom-free for at least 24 hours
- D. Only handle packaged food

**11. What is the first step when cleaning dishes in a three-compartment sink?**

- A. Scrape off food
- B. Rinse with clean, warm water
- C. Sanitize
- D. Wash with warm, soapy water

**12. Which of these is an example of a TCS food?**

- A. Dry rice
- B. A whole uncut apple
- C. Saltine crackers
- D. Cut melon

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**13. Which pathogen is commonly linked to undercooked poultry and eggs?**

- A. Norovirus
- B. Listeria
- C. Hepatitis A
- D. Salmonella

**14. Cold TCS food should be held at or below:**

- A. 60 degrees F
- B. 70 degrees F
- C. 41 degrees F
- D. 50 degrees F

**15. In a refrigerator, raw chicken should be stored:**

- A. Below ready-to-eat foods
- B. Anywhere there is room
- C. Right next to salad
- D. Above ready-to-eat foods



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**16. The correct order for handwashing is:**

- A. Wet hands, apply soap and scrub, rinse, then dry
- B. Rinse, soap, dry
- C. Soap, dry, rinse
- D. Dry, soap, rinse

**17. How many major food allergens are recognized in the US after sesame was added?**

- A. 12
- B. 9
- C. 5
- D. 3

**18. The correct order of steps in a three-compartment sink is:**

- A. Rinse, wash, sanitize
- B. Wash, sanitize, rinse
- C. Sanitize, wash, rinse
- D. Wash, rinse, sanitize, then air dry

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**19. The best way to prevent pests is to:**

- A. Leave doors open for air
- B. Deny them food, water, and shelter and seal entry points
- C. Spray pesticide daily
- D. Keep trash uncovered

**20. Which is an approved way to thaw food?**

- A. Under running water at 70 degrees F or below
- B. In a closed car
- C. In direct sunlight
- D. On a windowsill



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**21. Which symptom requires a food handler to report to their manager?**

- A. A bandaged paper cut
- B. A small bruise
- C. Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- D. Feeling a little tired

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**22. Which is a sign of a possible cockroach infestation?**

- A. Dirt tracks along the wall
- B. Gnaw marks on boxes, pipes, and food packages
- C. Droppings that look like grains of black pepper
- D. Urine stains

**23. What is the main goal of food safety?**

- A. Make food look attractive
- B. Reduce food cost
- C. Prevent foodborne illness
- D. Speed up service

**24. Hepatitis A is classified as a:**

- A. Fungus
- B. Bacterium
- C. Parasite
- D. Virus

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**25. Hot TCS food should be held at or above:**

- A. 100 degrees F
- B. 120 degrees F
- C. 110 degrees F
- D. 135 degrees F



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**26. When storing raw meats by cooking temperature, which item belongs on the bottom shelf?**

- A. Whole fish
- B. Lettuce
- C. Raw poultry
- D. Ground beef

**27. A handwashing sink should be used for:**

- A. Rinsing produce
- B. Filling mop buckets
- C. Thawing food
- D. Washing hands only

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**28. Allergen cross-contact happens when:**

- A. Food is frozen
- B. An allergen is transferred to a food that should not contain it
- C. A label is missing
- D. Food is overcooked

**29. After sanitizing, dishes should be:**

- A. Towel-dried
- B. Stacked while still wet
- C. Used immediately while wet
- D. Air-dried

**30. Pesticides in a food establishment should be applied by:**

- A. Customers
- B. Any employee
- C. The newest hire
- D. A licensed pest control operator (PCO)



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## Answer Key & Explanations

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**1. D — Time/Temperature Control for Safety**

TCS stands for Time/Temperature Control for Safety. These foods need temperature control to limit the growth of pathogens.

**2. D — An infected food handler who did not wash hands after using the restroom**

Norovirus spreads easily from an infected person's feces or vomit, often through unwashed hands after using the restroom.

**3. D — 41 to 135 degrees F**

The temperature danger zone is 41 to 135 degrees F, where pathogens grow most readily.

**4. B — The transfer of harmful substances or microorganisms from one food or surface to another**

Cross-contamination is the transfer of pathogens or harmful substances from one surface or food to another.

**5. C — 20 seconds**

Scrub hands with soap for at least 20 seconds, then rinse and dry.

**6. A — Peanuts**

Peanuts are one of the major food allergens.

**7. D — Reduces pathogens to safe levels**

Sanitizing reduces the number of pathogens on a clean surface to safe levels.

**8. B — Droppings and gnaw marks**

Droppings and gnaw marks are common signs of rodents.

**9. A — In a refrigerator at 41 degrees F or below**

Thawing in a refrigerator at 41 degrees F or below is a safe method.

**10. C — Be excluded from work until symptom-free for at least 24 hours**

A food handler with vomiting or diarrhea must be excluded until symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

**11. A — Scrape off food**

The first step is to scrape or remove food debris before washing.

**12. D — Cut melon**

Cut melon is a TCS food because cutting exposes its moist interior, allowing pathogens to grow. Whole produce and dry goods are not TCS.

**13. D — Salmonella**

Salmonella is commonly linked to poultry, eggs, and contaminated produce.

**14. C — 41 degrees F**

Cold TCS food must be held at 41 degrees F or below.



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**15. A — Below ready-to-eat foods**

Raw chicken must be stored below ready-to-eat foods so its juices cannot drip onto them.

**16. A — Wet hands, apply soap and scrub, rinse, then dry**

Proper handwashing is: wet hands, apply soap and scrub, rinse, then dry.

**17. B — 9**

The US recognizes 9 major allergens after sesame was added by the FASTER Act.

**18. D — Wash, rinse, sanitize, then air dry**

The order is wash, rinse, sanitize, then air dry.

**19. B — Deny them food, water, and shelter and seal entry points**

Deny pests food, water, and shelter and seal entry points to keep them out.

**20. A — Under running water at 70 degrees F or below**

Thawing under running water at 70 degrees F or below is approved.

**21. C — Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)**

Jaundice must be reported to the manager and may require notifying the health department.

**22. C — Droppings that look like grains of black pepper**

Cockroach droppings resemble small, dark grains of black pepper and are a telltale sign of infestation.

**23. C — Prevent foodborne illness**

The main goal of food safety is to prevent foodborne illness and keep customers safe.

**24. D — Virus**

Hepatitis A is a virus that can be spread by an infected food handler.

**25. D — 135 degrees F**

Hot TCS food must be held at 135 degrees F or above.

**26. C — Raw poultry**

Raw poultry has the highest required cooking temperature, so it is stored on the bottom shelf.

**27. D — Washing hands only**

A handwashing sink is for washing hands only and nothing else.

**28. B — An allergen is transferred to a food that should not contain it**

Allergen cross-contact is the transfer of an allergen to a food that should not contain it.

**29. D — Air-dried**

Dishes must air-dry; towel-drying can recontaminate them.

**30. D — A licensed pest control operator (PCO)**

Only a licensed pest control operator should apply pesticides in a food establishment.



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